

Mary Pennington, and her late great-aunt, Mary Natonski. Parks comes from her great-grandfather, Wayman Parks Allen.

She is the first grandchild for grandparents General and Mrs. Richard Natonski, and Cass and Cindy Pennington. Proud great-grandparents include Sadie Natonski, Mary Pennington, and Wayman and Mary Allen.

Mary Parks Natonski joins a wonderful family who are devoted to her well-being and will empower her for a bright future.

#### HONORING THE BOTHELL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

**HON. SUZAN K. DeIBENE**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Ms. DeIBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 2014 Bothell High School football team. On December 6, the Cougars won the 4A Washington State football championship, finishing their outstanding season with a perfect record of 14–0. I congratulate them on this exemplary achievement.

The resounding 24–14 victory over the defending champions, Chiawana High School, left no doubt that Bothell is the state's best team. This championship win is especially remarkable for the Cougars, as it is the football team's first state title in school history.

I would like to give special recognition to Caleb Meyer, Damani St. John-Watkins, and Ross Bowers, for their exceptional performances in Saturday's game. Meyer and St. John-Watkins both capped the season with over 100 yards rushing, but it was quarterback Ross Bower's score with 6 seconds remaining in the 3rd quarter that grabbed the headlines. On a scramble from 5 yards out, Bower landed a complete front flip over the Chiawana defenders on his way into the end zone. He also went 17–19, passing for over 200 yards and a touchdown.

The Cougars displayed a great deal of character and determination throughout this season led by Coach Tom Bainter. His constant encouragement and training helped guide the Cougars to this momentous victory.

Again, I congratulate the Bothell football team on all of their success. Their accomplishments on the field this season are hard-earned and well-deserved.

#### PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 4, 2014*

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today I am voting against the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of Fiscal Year 2015. Although this bill contains a few positive measures and provisions that I support it unfortunately creates a two year blank check for the U.S. to wage a war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) in both Syria and Iraq.

I am vehemently opposed to this two year authorization to train and equip as yet un-

known forces in both Syria and Iraq to combat ISIL. Tragically, Congress has once again abdicated its constitutional responsibilities under War Powers. Instead of voting on a vague authorization today, we should wait and pass judgment on a more detailed assessment on this operation and vote on a specific authorization for use of military force (AUMF). In addition to the \$5 billion already authorized to continue the fight against ISIL, this bill mistakenly allows for the reprogramming of funds as the President sees fit from the \$63.7 billion overseas contingency operations account, which has turned into a slush fund to fight unauthorized wars.

If you turned to any of my colleagues today and asked the basic question who are the 5,000 fighters that the U.S. will train and equip in Syria, they could not give you an answer. Not even our intelligence agencies know who we can trust. Before granting authorization, Congress should at least know who it is we are giving U.S. weapons to and what their ideology and political goals are. This is a complex mess of various actors, many of whom cannot be considered trustworthy allies. The Syrian opposition is made up of hundreds of thousands of fighters from various factions that are also fighting amongst each other.

In Iraq, the U.S. is looking to form an alliance with a new government whose current Prime Minister has yet to prove he will bring Sunnis back into an inclusive society and government. At the moment the Iraqi army barely exists on paper. The main Iraqi force currently fighting ISIL, Asaib Ahl al-haq, is incredibly hostile to the U.S. and was attacking our troops up to the last day of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The enemy of our enemy is not always an ally.

That is why it is so critical that Congress be presented with a detailed plan of this "train and equip" operation including who it is that we are arming before we vote and this authorization fails to do that.

Most importantly what we are voting on today is a small part of President Obama's larger strategy to go to war with ISIL. No President can declare war without Congressional authorization. If the U.S. is going to war with ISIL as it appears that we are, then my colleagues need to vote on an AUMF. The American people did not elect us to punt the responsibility for matters of war and peace to the President. The purpose of an AUMF is to lay out in detail the scope, plan, purpose, and duration of a military operation and to provide both classified and non-classified briefings to Congress and allow them to debate and express their opinions on the merits of this. Absent an AUMF from Congress, we are committing ourselves to an open ended war, declared by the President about which we have little to no details.

Despite my disagreements with the President on defense policy, members of our armed forces must be adequately funded and get the services they deserve. The bill includes increased funding for the National Guard, a 1% pay raise for our troops, and additional funding for mental health screenings and psychological services for those who have served and suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, this bill prevents the retirement of the A–10 Warthog, a more cost effective close air-support weapons system than the F–35 Joint Striker, contains funding for nuclear non-proliferation activities, and acquisi-

tion reform measures that take a small step in reining in the bloated Pentagon budget. I strongly support these provisions of the NDAA.

Lastly, there was a public lands package attached to this bill that include provisions that are critical to the West Coast and Oregon. The REFI Act will save West Coast fishermen millions of dollars by refinancing expensive, unfair high-interest federal loans. The expansion of the Oregon Caves National Monument will boost the local economy and create needed jobs in southern Oregon, protect the unique cave system for hiking and other recreational opportunities, and it designates the River Styx—the underground stream running through Oregon Caves—as the first subterranean Wild and Scenic River in the nation. The package wasn't perfect, but it was the result of a multi-year negotiation to clear the backlog of mostly non-controversial, locally supported lands bills that have languished in this dysfunctional Congress. I didn't pick the vehicle to move these bills, and unfortunately it was attached to the NDAA.

Again, I will ultimately vote no on this legislation because it contains a two-year blank check to fight an unauthorized war in Iraq and Syria. Congress shouldn't duck its responsibility to thoroughly debate and discuss the authorization of use of force.

#### IN HONOR OF NEW MEXICO HOUSE CHIEF CLERK STEPHEN ARIAS

**HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of New Mexico House Chief Clerk Stephen Arias, who is retiring at the end of the year.

Mr. Arias began his career with the New Mexico Legislature in 1966 and worked his way through the ranks of the House, starting as a clerk reading legislation, a payroll officer, and even a coat checker. In 1983 he was elected House Chief Clerk by the majority caucus and has served in that position for the past 31 years. In that time, Mr. Arias became the third-longest serving legislative clerk in the country. Originally elected Chief Clerk under Speaker of the House Raymond Sanchez, Mr. Arias went on to serve under four subsequent speakers as he was re-elected time and again by the members of the House—a testament to the tremendous job he did over three decades.

Although they may not receive a lot of attention, Chief Clerks are essential to the smooth functioning of the legislature. Chief Clerks are in charge of hiring seasonal staff, tracking and filing bills, maintaining and setting the House budget, keeping communication between the House and Senate chambers flowing smoothly, and helping incoming lawmakers and committees address constituent issues. Mr. Arias has done all these things and more during his tenure as Chief Clerk, and I applaud his tireless work ethic. I congratulate Stephen Arias on his remarkable career, and I wish him the best in his future endeavors.